



The Weekly Wrap Up

May 12, 2006

From Viola Miller, Tennessee's Commissioner for
The Department of Children's Services

TAKING THE LONG-TERM VIEW

Often, even before our own children are born, we are planning for their futures.

We worry about where they will go to school. Can we get them in the best child-care program? What do we need to do about saving for college? Think about how often we ask even very young children, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Childhood and adolescence are filled with experiences that we hope will prepare our children for successful and happy adulthoods. We're always reinforcing good manners, developing healthy relations, making certain that our children have a wide variety of experiences and opportunities to grow and learn. We want to take care of any health issues as soon as possible so that they will not adversely affect our children as they develop.

All this behavior is about families taking the long-term view with their children. We want them ready for first grade when the time comes. We want them to go to college, get a good job, get married and have a family of their own.

(My mother always wanted me to be a hairdresser. Now, I disappointed her terribly, but that didn't mean she didn't have a long-term view in mind for me!)

Now let's think about our children and youth in custody. How often do we address issues about this child's needs in relationship to that long-term view? Do we ask at a child and family team meeting, "How do we support this three-year-old's readiness for first grade?"

Do we spend time talking with that 13-year-old about what he wants to be when he grows up and what his hopes and dreams are for his future? How often do we help that young man think about what courses he needs to take now and what activities he needs to pursue in order to help him realize those dreams and goals?

When I was in charge of welfare reform in my former life, I met with a group of welfare moms and asked, “What are your dreams for yourself and your children?”

I was shocked to hear primarily “survival” dreams: enough food, shoes for school, not getting evicted.

We created a whole part of our reform effort around helping these women learn to dream and to see possibilities for themselves. It had never crossed their minds that they might one day be able to own their own home, take a vacation or send their children to college.

Our engagement with the families and children we serve must take into account these long-term view issues as well. Remember, we want for our DCS families exactly what we want for our own family. Hopefully, for most of our children and families, our involvement is brief and productive.

Whatever time we have with them, we owe them more than, “Where can we leave this kid tonight?”

Viola Miller

Human Nature 101 / Part 3

Here’s my “**Top 10 List**” (*move over David Letterman*) for beginning with the basics in developing your own daily recognition system.

Remember that gimmicks, gadgets and giveaways can be fun and memorable, but nothing can replace a good old-fashioned and sincere **THANK YOU!**

Lend an ear. Listening is one of the most under-utilized recognition activities in the world. Regardless of the speaker’s position, listening sends a message that you care – and that they are important!

SIGN LANGUAGE: Make a habit of using non-verbal recognition like “thumbs up” or ‘high-fives’. This helps spread enthusiasm throughout the workplace.

Recognize others in the way they **WANT** to be recognized. Don’t assume that others appreciate the same forms of praise that you do. The best way to know is to **ASK** a new employee, “When you do a good job, how do you like to be recognized?”

BE ACCESSIBLE! Make time for the people you work with - especially those who work *for* you.

HELP THEM GROW... Work with people to develop their talents and enhance their skills. Not only will you recognize their 'potential', you'll also set them up for future success.

Let your values be your guide! "Give" people respect, honesty, feedback, trust and cooperation.

Sometimes the most meaningful recognition is just "walking the talk".

CELEBRATE SUCCESS! Mention those who have made valuable contributions publicly in meetings, newsletters etc.

KEEP IT PROPORTIONAL! Exercise good judgment in the amount and type of recognition you give, making sure it is appropriate for the type of behavior being recognized. Be fair across the board.

Help others to develop a recognition 'mind-set' by using a display board/calendar with important dates of birthdays, anniversaries, special events and leave a space for " A PAT ON THE BACK "

Today's Thought: *According to a survey by Robert Half International, "As many as 25% of good employees who quit their jobs cite a "lack of appreciation" as their reason.*

Sandy Sauceman, Personnel Analyst

DCS Human Resource Development

Dear Comm. Miller:

I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention an exceptional performance turned in by Vicki L. Patrick-Davis, a DCS Program Manager in Adoption Services located in the Cordell Hull Bldg. on the 8th Floor. Recently she went way above and beyond the call of duty in obtaining some documentation that was critically important to the successful prosecution in criminal court of two child abuse perpetrators in the North East region. She dropped what she was doing to respond to an emergency

that was not of her own making, stayed late to work on resolving the issue, and took time out of her schedule the next day to see that the emergency had been resolved.

Without her tremendous effort and cooperation, it is very likely that this particular case would have turned out differently. She deserves a very sincere and heartfelt thank you from me, personally, and from the Department as a whole. I am proud to work with such an outstanding team player and wanted you to know that she is indeed a very special person.

Sincerely,

Jim Wyche
DCS-Regional General Counsel
North East Region



27th Annual Iris Festival Parade

The Weakley County DCS office got together with the help of a retired DCS employee to participate in the 27th Annual Iris Festival Parade held on

Saturday May 16th. Brenda Davis, retired DCS secretary, entered her truck in the parade. The Weakley County crew decorated the truck with recruitment banners and handed out recruitment information. It was a great day for the parade and it was estimated that over 1500 people were there. There were assorted floats, marching bands, cars, horses and wagons.

The Weakley County DCS caseworkers and their children rode or walked in the parade: Anniabile Clericuzio, Laura Ridley, Hayden Ridley, Carrie Insko, Vanessa Harrison, Kate Long, Adrianna Long, Johnny Plunk, Elizabeth Plunk, Abigail Plunk, Stephanie Coleman, Clarie Coleman, Brenda Davis and Madelynn Webb.

Stephanie Coleman



The Sullivan County Children's Advocacy Center held its annual CPIT Retreat on May 5, 2006. The theme for the retreat was "An Incredible Retreat for our Everyday Heroes". The agenda consisted of training session on SIDS (ADA's Becca Davenport & Jim Goodwin), Case Preparation (ADA Barry Staubus), "You've been subpoenaed, Now What?" (ADA's Jim Goodwin & Todd Martin) and Meth is Death (ADA Gene Perrin). Other training sessions included X-Rays (Dr. LeAnn Neal) and Cultural Sensitivity (Drs. Rahim Raoufi & Jennifer Peters). We also had several team building exercises and lot's of good food!!!! The CPIT Team of Sullivan County would like to thank the Children's Advocacy Center of Sullivan County and the 2nd Judicial District Attorney's Office for all of their encouragement and support in helping to make our CPIT Team the BEST!

Amy Whitt-Bachman
Child Protective Services Investigator

Core Leadership Team Meeting

Steve Hornsby, Presiding. May 9, 2006

Cultural Competence: William Haynes

William Haynes introduced Vicki Burton and Janice Banks to CLT members. Vicki Burton is the chair of the Multicultural Committee. She is stationed in Jackson Tennessee. Janice Banks is the consultant with Small Planet Works, Inc and will be working with the Multicultural Committee on developing cultural competency for the agency. Ms. Banks provided an overview to the CLT members of her agency and Small Planet Works role in working with DCS.

The scope of the diversity work will include:

- Self-assessments and surveys
- Curriculum presentations and trainings
- Assessment of Policy, Practice, etc
- Pilot Dialogue Program
- Annual Evaluation

Winning Balances

Winning Balances is a diversity curriculum being offered to Central Office staff. The participation has dropped within the last couple of months. William encouraged Executive Directors to encourage their staff to attend. There is a measure of cultural competency training in the regions through in-service and pre-service training.

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John B. Discovery Update: Mary Jane Davis

Mary Jane stated the discovery phase would end on May 15th.

State CQI Team and QSR: Daryl Chansuthus

The State CQI team will meet quarterly and is comprised of Domain CQI Team Leaders. The regional staff that makes referrals to the CQI team will be asked to attend. The following Issues discussed at the last meeting included flex funds and MSSW stipend issues. The fiscal staff has established four workgroups to address issues related to flex funds. William Haynes will be working with regional representation and Stacy Borasky to address MSSW issues.

One of the core regional issues around flex funds is how to access funds at the CFTM. Bonnie expressed concern that we have been focused on how we need a process that moves quickly. Where do we articulate to everyone that we don't have an endless supply of money? We can't say yes to everything. Where is the process that will take place in the region when the barriers are addressed? How do we approach that? Judy thought there was a committee in place in the region that makes the approvals. Mildred stated regions identify emergency and non-emergency needs. Tom Riche stated we need uniformity in the regions. Tom suggested Mildred and Judy meet with the fiscal directors.

QSR

Daryl provided a statewide overview of the 11 region QSR results. A retreat will be held and discuss how we get this information back to the regions quickly.

Child and Family Status overall was 85% and System Performance overall was 50%. The results for System Performance, however, are a bit skewed by an outlier (Placement Supports), without which they would be 33%. System indicators to which we will need to give particular focus include teamwork and coordination, assessment and understanding, long-term view, and planning. Related child and family indicators of particular interest include family functioning, permanency, and stability.

Daryl stated one of the most serious issues that affects permanency for our children and families is relational and placement stability. High turnover is an issue for DCS. Also during the first 12 months children are generally moving more frequently. Rachel Sharp added that access to informal supports is another contributing factor, and Eric suggested that transitioning

and long-term view were also important factors impacting permanency. Various initiatives the department has introduced should address these issues. In particular, the hope is that unified Placement, CANS, and MRS will address issues related to stability and permanency.

TennCare Auditor: Mary Beth Franklyn

TennCare and DCS have an interagency agreement, which is monitored by TennCare's PAR system. Previous audits have not given DCS any findings, but have given TennCare a finding related to better monitoring of DCS.

Alex Armstrong is the auditor in the TennCare Internal Audit division who is following up with DCS. He has spoken with Mary Beth Franklyn and Lana Beavers. If he contacts you, please refer him to Lana Beavers and Mary Beth Franklyn.

Judy Cole and Mildred Lawhorn should give this same message to the regions, as Mr. Armstrong may try to contact them for information.

Announcements: Judy Cole

Northeast's community forum was held last week and they reported out on their Regional Implementation Plan. The audience included a legislator, school nurse, school officials, physician, and others. Judy stated the event was a success.

Celebration of Excellence: Audrey Corder

The Celebration of Excellence is sponsored by the Independent Living Program and recognizes the accomplishments of youth in care who have graduated high school, college or received their GED. It's an opportunity to support our children. The Celebration of Excellence will be held on June 4th at Opryland Hotel.

Congratulations to the Northeast Graduates



Congratulations to the Northeast graduates who were among the first few to graduate from the East TN State (ETSU) Masters of Social Work (MSW) program on May 6, 2006! Michelle Hathaway (Resource CMII), Christi Vaughn (Foster Parent Support CMII), Anna Ringersma (CMII Elizabethton Gilrs Group Home), and Becky Quillen (Speciality Team CMII) worked long hours to achieve this honor. The girls worked especially hard the past two semesters trying to juggle their school work, regular work and their field study placements. We would like to say "GREAT JOB girls!! We're very proud of you!"

Vanessa Addington
Foster Parent Support Case Manager
Northeast Region, Sullivan County
